

UNCLASSIFIED Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

AM030

R

PAGE 01 OF 03 BUENOS 04805 00 OF 04 280525Z
ACTION: ARA-00

6171

INFO OCT-03 COPY-01 ADS-00 INF-10 EUR-00 SS-00 CIAE-00
H-01 NSAE-00 HA-00 L-02 PH-10 PA-01 ONE-01
USIE-00 SP-02 SUP-01 PRS-01 SLPD-01 /040 W

R 191920Z JUN 84
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2150
INFO AMEMBASSY AUCKLAND
AMEMBASSY BRACILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCPAC QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
DIA WASHDC

BUENOS AIRES 04805

CINCSO FOR INTAFF

CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, PARK, PREL, MARR, MASS, AR
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT-ARMED FORCES RELATIONS

REFS: (A) BUENOS AIRES 4522, (B) BUENOS AIRES 4473,
(C) BUENOS AIRES 3924, (D) BUENOS AIRES 3377,
(E) BUENOS AIRES 2201

1. [REDACTED] - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY. THE MILITARY CONTINUE TO BE DISGRUNTLED. THEY HAVE LOST THEIR POWER AND ARE FRUSTRATED BY THEIR INABILITY TO CONTROL EVENTS THAT INFLUENCE THEIR CAREERS, THEIR STATUS AND THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING, NOT TO MENTION THE LOSS OF IMMUNITY FROM PROSECUTION FOR CRIMES DURING THE "DIRTY WAR." THE GOVERNING RADICAL PARTY (U.C.R.) WOULD LIKE TO REDUCE AND RE-ORIENT THE MILITARY, ESTABLISH A CHALLENGER, COMPETENT DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT, AND CURB THE MILITARY'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE. HUGE BUDGET CUTS AND ATTEMPTS TO IMPLEMENT RE-SIZING, A JOINT COMMAND STRUCTURE AND RE-EDUCATION EXACERBATE MILITARY DISTRUST AND RESENTMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE U.C.R. ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL, MANY OF WHOM RESPECT ALFONSIN, CONSIDER THE DOMINANT ELEMENTS OF HIS PARTY TO BE ANTI-MILITARY AND "LEFTIST."

3. ALFONSIN AND DEFENSE MINISTER BORRAS WANT TO MODERATE TENSIONS AND THEY ARE MOVING CAUTIOUSLY, SINCE THEY REALIZE THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ARMED SERVICES REQUIRED MANY YEARS IF IT IS NOT TO LEAD TO A REACTION WHICH MIGHT THREATEN THE NEW, DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. ALFONSIN AND BORRAS TRY TO DEMONSTRATE SENSITIVITY TO MILITARY CONCERNS ON HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS, PROMOTIONS AND MILITARY RESTRUCTURING. THE GOVERNMENT ESCHES INTERVENING DIRECTLY IN ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING OR REORDERING OF ARMED FORCES BUDGET PRIORITIES. IT APPEARS THAT THE GOVERNMENT LACKS AN OVERALL STRATEGY FOR ACCOMPLISHING ITS OBJECTIVE OF DE-POLITICIZING THE MILITARY. RATHER, ALFONSIN AND BORRAS SEEM TO BE MOVING AS THE POLITICAL WINDS DICTATE, TRYING TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION WHILE SEEKING MARGINAL GAINS. ON BALANCE, THEY MADE PROGRESS IN IMPROVING CIVILIAN

CONTROLS ON THE MILITARY, WITHOUT CAUSING A MAJOR REACTION AND DESPITE MILITARY RESENTMENT. THE MILITARY IS HARDLY AN ALLY, HOWEVER, AND ITS POSTURE IS NOT CERTAIN IF AND WHEN THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS HELP, SUCH AS IF THERE IS PROLONGED, VIOLENT LABOR STRIFE. OUR POLICY REMAINS BEING SUPPORTIVE OF ALFONSIN'S OBJECTIVE OF ASSERTING CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE ARMED SERVICES. END SUMMARY.

ALFONSIN'S LONG-TERM GOALS

4. THE ARGENTINE MILITARY IS IN A PERIOD OF WRENCHING ADJUSTMENT AS THE ALFONSIN GOVERNMENT TRIES TO REDUCE THE MILITARY FROM THE DOMINANT POLITICAL FORCE IN ARGENTINA TO A PROFESSIONAL ARMED SERVICE RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE. ALTHOUGH MILITARY BUDGET CUTS ARE AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL NECESSITY DUE TO OTHER DEMANDS, THEY ARE ALSO CONSISTENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL GOAL OF SHRINKING THE ARMED FORCES. THE GOVERNING PARTY ALSO WOULD LIKE TO IMPLEMENT A JOINT COMMAND AND OPERATIONS STRUCTURE RESPONSIBLE TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE CIVILIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE, TO REEDUCATE AND PROFESSIONALIZE THE ARMED FORCES, TO MODIFY CURRICULUM AT SERVICE INSTITUTIONS, AND TO REDUCE, PERHAPS ABOLISH, CONSCRIPTION. ALFONSIN TRIES TO DEFUSE THE INEVITABLE TENSIONS BY MOVING CAUTIOUSLY AND TRYING TO CONVINCE THE MILITARY THAT HE HAS THEIR CONCERNS IN MIND.

HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS

5. THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD JUDICIAL INVESTIGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IS AN EXAMPLE OF ITS SEARCH FOR BALANCE. ALFONSIN ATTEMPTED TO ENSURE THAT MILITARY AND SECURITY PERSONNEL WOULD BE TRIED EXCLUSIVELY IN MILITARY COURTS. CONGRESS DECIDED ON MILITARY TRIALS SUBJECT TO CIVILIAN FEDERAL APPELLATE COURT REVIEW. WHILE HALF A LOAF, AT LEAST THUS FAR NO MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN TRIED IN LOCAL, PROVINCIAL OR FEDERAL COURTS. CASES BROUGHT THUS FAR BEFORE CIVIL COURTS EVENTUALLY WERE REMANDED TO MILITARY TRIBUNALS. THE SUPREME COURT HAS UNDER REVIEW A CASE REQUIRING IT TO DECIDE WHETHER A CRIME AGAINST A DISAPPEARED PERSON OCCURRED SOLELY AT THE TIME OF DISAPPEARANCE OR CONTINUED FOR AS LONG AS THE PERSON DOES NOT REAPPEAR ALIVE OR IS FOUND DEAD. THE CASE IS VITAL TO THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY FOR TRYING MILITARY-INSPIRED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BECAUSE, SHOULD THE COURT RULE THAT A CRIME CONTINUES, MILITARY COURTS, UNDER THE NEW MILITARY CODE, WOULD APPARENTLY NOT BE COMPETENT TO TRY CASES. WHILE THE COURT IS EXPECTED TO RULE IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FAVOR, THE OUTCOME IS NOT CERTAIN.

6. MILITARY JUSTICE IS SLOW. ALFONSIN HAS PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE PACE OF INVESTIGATIONS, AND THE GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY MAY AUTHORIZE THE APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL JUDGES, TO mollify the HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SUPREME COURT'S ADMONISHMENT TO JUDGES AGAINST REVEALING DETAILS OF EVIDENCE IN HUMAN RIGHTS CASES HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE AND FREEDOM COVERAGE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES HAS WAXED.

RESTRUCTURING PLANS

7. ALFONSIN HAS ALSO PROCEEDED CAUTIOUSLY WITH PLANS TO RESTRUCTURE THE MILITARY. THE CHIEF OF THE JOINT STAFF, BRIGADIER GENERAL FERNANDEZ TORRES, HAS ACHIEVED HIGH VISIBILITY, OFTEN APPEARING IN THE PRESS

UNCLASSIFIED

840220
3462

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

PAGE 02 OF 03

OR ARGENTINE TELEVISION BESIDE THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE OR THE PRESIDENT. AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY, GENERAL FERNANDEZ TORRES, AN INFANTRY OFFICER, LOBBIES FOR A STRONGER JOINT STAFF WITH ALL THREE SERVICES. HOWEVER, THE AIR FORCE AND THE CAVALRY FACION OF THE ARMY-- FROM WHICH ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL JORGE ARGENTINO COMES--OPPOSE A STRONGER JOINT COMMAND STRUCTURE, WITH THE NAVY LUKEWARM AT BEST TOWARD THE PROPOSAL. ALTHOUGH THE AIR FORCE CLAIMS TO SUPPORT JOINT OPERATIONS, IT IS CONCERNED ABOUT LOSS OF AUTONOMY AND INFLUENCE IN THE PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE. CAVALRY BRANCH CONCERN STems FROM TRADITIONAL INFANTRY-CAVALRY ENMITY. AS A RESULT, RESTRUCTURING IS STALLED AND THE PRESIDENT APPEARS NOT TO BE PRESSING.

PROMOTIONS

8. THE LONG DELAY IN MILITARY PROMOTIONS IS A CONTINUING THORN IN MILITARY-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THAT SENATE OPPOSITION TO A FEW CONTROVERSIAL OFFICERS IS CAUSING THE HOLDUP. A SENIOR DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIAL INFORMED US THAT THE GOVERNMENT DELIBERATELY DELAYED PRESENTING THE LIST TO THE SENATE UNTIL A TIME WHEN IT COULD BE APPROVED WITHOUT ACRIMONY. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE TOLD MISSION OFFICERS THAT THE LIST WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE SENATE, WHICH WOULD BE ONE LESS ONGOING IRRITANT FOR THE MILITARY.

PRESIDENTIAL STROKING

9. THE PRESIDENT AND DEFENSE MINISTER BORRAS ARE TRYING TO REACH OUT TO THE MILITARY WITH WARM WORDS AND VISITS TO BASES. ALFONSOIN TRAVELED WIDELY TO APPEAR BEFORE MILITARY AUDIENCES IN HIS CONTINUING CAMPAIGN TO DEMONSTRATE HIS RECOGNITION OF MILITARY CONCERNS, BUT ALSO TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HE IS THE FORCES' COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND EXPECTS THEIR SUPPORT AS HIS ADMINISTRATION CONFRONTS ARGENTINA'S PROBLEMS. DEFENSE SECRETARY JAUNARENA LATER SAID THAT ARMY DAY CEREMONIES AT MENDOZA IN LATE MAY, WHICH DREW A LARGE, FAVORABLE CROWD DUE TO ALFONSOIN'S PRESENCE, WERE A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THE REINTEGRATION OF THE ARMED FORCES TO ARGENTINE SOCIETY.

10. CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY HAS BEEN SEEN IN ACTION AS WELL AS WORDS. REF C NOTED JAUNARENA'S MAJOR ROLE DURING THE VISIT OF U.S. AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL CHARLES GABRIEL. IN ADDITION, THE CIVILIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE CHANNEL FOR APPROVAL OF FMS SALES IS OPERATIVE AND, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE ARGENTINE AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF'S COMMENT REGARDING MILITARY SALES (REF C), ACCEPTED BY THE SERVICES.

THE BUDGET

11. THE MILITARY BUDGET FOR 1984 REPORTEDLY WILL BE REDUCED FROM SIX PERCENT TO 3.8 PERCENT OF GDP, OR APPROXIMATELY 61 PERCENT OF LAST YEAR'S AMOUNT. AS REPORTED REF D, THIS CUT IS APPARENTLY GREATER THAN THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE HAD WANTED BECAUSE SUCH A DEEP SLASH IN SPENDING WILL PROVOKE MILITARY RESENTMENT.

12. ALTHOUGH BUDGET CUTS ARE DRIVEN BY GDP FINANCIAL SHORTFALLS, THEY ALSO COULD BE THE MOD'S INSTRUMENT FOR FORCING GENUINE RESTRUCTURING, I.E., REVIEWING DOCTRINE, WAR CONTINGENCIES, ORDER OF BATTLE, AND DUPLICATION OF ACTIVITIES. THE MILITARY, IT IS HOPED, WOULD ALSO REDUCE EXPENSES ON LUXURIES AND

NON-ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FORCES AS A WHOLE, I.E., DE-COMMISSION A FEW SHIPS AND AGING AIRCRAFT FOR WHICH SPARE PARTS ARE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN; SELL UNNECESSARY PROPERTIES (E.G. A LARGE INVENTORY OF EXCESS OFFICE BUILDINGS; CATTLE, SHEEP AND HORSE RANCHES, WORTH HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS); TERMINATE SUBSIDIES TO EXPENSIVE MILITARY SECONDARY SCHOOLS WHICH ARE COST INEFFECTIVE (FEW GRADUATES ENTER THE MILITARY). SOME PERQUISITES OF THE MILITARY SUCH AS WIDESPREAD ALLOCATION OF OFFICIAL CARS AND DRIVERS, ARE DISAPPEARING. MANY CONSCRIPTS REPORTEDLY WILL BE RELEASED FROM SERVICE SIX MONTHS EARLY, AFTER THEY CONCLUDE THEIR BASIC TRAINING, TO SAVE MONEY ON HOUSING, FOOD, AND SIMILAR COSTS. HOWEVER, THE ARMED SERVICES THUS FAR ARE RESISTING A FUNDAMENTAL RESTRUCTURING OF COSTS, AND THE CIVILIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE IS UNWILLING TO SET PRIORITIES ITSELF, IN ORDER TO AVOID OR DELAY CONFRONTATION WITH THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

13. SENIOR ARMY COMMANDERS AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, BRIGADIER GENERAL FERNANDEZ TORRES, REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED THE "CRITICALLY" LOW WAGES FOR MIDDLE- AND LOW-RANKING ARMY PERSONNEL WITH MINISTER BORRAS. AN EMERGENCY SEVEN PERCENT WAGE HIKE FOR LOW-RANKED PERSONNEL WAS ANNOUNCED IN EARLY JUNE, WITH ADDITIONAL SPECIAL INCREASES PLANNED FOR THE NEAR FUTURE. ALTHOUGH, IN FAIRNESS, MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE FARING NO WORSE THAN PUBLIC SECTOR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES, IN GENERAL MOST MILITARY PERSONNEL BELIEVE THEIR STANDARDS OF LIVING HAVE DECLINED SUBSTANTIALLY IN RECENT YEARS, AND THEY ARE DISCONTENTED. MOREOVER, THE ARMY WAS THREATENED WITH A CUTOFF BY ITS FOOD SUPPLIERS WHO ALLEGEDLY HAD NOT BEEN PAID FOR UP TO 120 DAYS. A HASTY PARTIAL PAYMENT AVERTED AN ACTUAL CESSATION, BUT THE EMBARRASSMENT OF AN ERGOWILE MIGHTY INSTITUTION BROUGHT SO LOW REMAINED. IN ANY EVENT, SUCH PATCHWORK WILL NOT SUFFICE OVER THE LONG TERM; BUDGET CUTS OF APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT MEAN THE MILITARY WILL HAVE TO START SOON CONSIDERING EXPENDITURE PRIORITIES FOR THE LONG TERM.

OF COUPS AND COMPLAINTS

14. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT ARGENTINA'S ECONOMIC AND OTHER TRIBULATIONS PRODUCE SPECULATIONS ABOUT COUPS. ONE FORMER SENIOR ARGENTINE ARMY OFFICER WHO ENJOYS THE RESPECT OF SOME ACTIVE AND RETIRED OFFICERS AND RIGHT-WING CIVILIANS HAS WRITTEN A CONFIDENTIAL REPORT, A COPY OF WHICH THE EMBASSY OBTAINED, WHICH SPECULATES THAT ALFONSOIN COULD BE REMOVED IN 1985 OR 1987 DUE TO DETERIORATING SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND RISING VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM. AT THAT TIME, THE REPORT POSTULATES TWO COURSES OF ACTION FOR THE ARMED FORCES, A MILITARY COUP OR A SEARCH FOR "CONSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS" (I.E., PRESIDENTIAL IMPEACHMENT) TO RESOLVE THE NATION'S LEADERSHIP CRISES. WITHIN THE ACTIVE FORCES, SOME OF THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED PROBLEMS ALIENATING THE MILITARY WOULD BE SECTARIAN, INSTITUTIONAL RATIONALES FOR ACTING IN SUCH A SCENARIO.

15. DISSATISFACTION IN MILITARY RANKS WILL BE PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE ALFONSOIN ADMINISTRATION, GIVEN THE GENERATIONS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE MILITARY, THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CHANGE THE ALFONSOIN GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING AND THE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES ARGENTINA WILL FACE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ALFONSOIN HAS NOT WON THE MILITARY'S LOYALTY, BUT HE AND BORRAS

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

PAGE 03 OF 03

MADE PROGRESS IN BRINGING THE MILITARY UNDER CIVILIAN CONTROL. ALL HERE ARE AWARE THAT CIVILIAN-MILITARY RELATIONS IS A LONG-TERM ISSUE. THE RADICALS' CHANCES FOR SUCCESS WILL DEPEND ON ALFONSIN AND BOFRAS' MAINTAINING THEIR OPENNESS TO ARMED FORCES CONCERNS WHILE CHOOSING CAREFULLY WHEN AND IN WHAT AREAS TO PUSH THEIR REFORM EFFORTS. IT IS POSSIBLE BUDGET AUSTERITY, ALTHOUGH REQUESTED BY THE MILITARY, MAY ULTIMATELY WORK TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ADVANTAGE, AS IT FACILITATES BY ATTRITION THE REDUCED MILITARY SIZE THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT HOW LATENT REGRETMENT OVER SMALL BUDGETS, HUMAN RIGHTS PROSECUTIONS AND OTHER ISSUES WILL AFFECT THE ATTITUDE OF THE ARMED FORCES WHEN AND IF THE GOVERNMENT RUNS INTO SERIOUS PROBLEMS, SUCH AS PROBABLE INTENSE LABOR STRIFE.

16. WE HAVE MADE GAINS IN OUR OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS BY SUPPORTING ALFONSIN'S OBJECTIVE OF ASSERTING CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE ARMED FORCES (REF D). WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN ORDER TO PURSUE OUR OTHER INTERESTS THROUGH BUILDING THE CONFIDENCE OF ALFONSIN AND HIS CLOSEST ADVISORS. ORTIZ

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~UNCLASSIFIED~~